

# Beneath Everything

by webbo

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Summary: What happened "Beneath the Surface" was more than a conversation about feeling feelings. Sam/Jack, Romance, Drama, Angst, Family, SHIP!

## 1. Beneath the Surface

He opened the door and there she was, the object of his thoughts for the past three weeks; the object of his thoughts for the past three months; and if Jack were honest with himself, the past three years as well. She looked small and weak, standing at his doorstep, inches from entering his home, wearing an orange cardigan and looking more tempting than sin. Damn.

"Carter," he spoke into the hot air. It was summer in this world, his world. It had been an icy winter in theirs.

She looked down and didn't answer, and he noticed she held a white sheet a paper that had been folded in half. She looked back up but avoided looking him in the eyes. "Can I come in?"

He raised his eyebrows at her lack of honorific. She knew immediately he had noticed, and she was glad for it. Feeling brave, or perhaps scared shitless, Sam pushed past him and entered his house. Jack scooted to the side and made room for her in his entryway, and turned to close the door. Sam slowly walked through the hallway and down the steps to his living room.

"Sure, make yourself at home," he said, using sarcasm as a means to mask his uncomfortable state. Jack O'Neill knew sarcastic, and he certainly knew gruff.

Sam ignored him, still unable to meet his gaze. She sat down slowly on his couch, perched on the edge, and held the white, folded sheet of paper in her hands. If there was a slight tremble to them, she was

certainly trying to hide it. "Have a seat, Jack."

He froze. "Have a seat, \_Jack\_?" he reiterated in a dumbfounded voice. Being dumbfounded by this woman was no new thing to him; she was smarter than three of him put together. But, being dumbfounded by her ease, her familiarity, her provocation of intimacy—well, this was new ground.

"Uh, yeah," she looked up and met his gaze, finally. "This needs to be a personal conversation."

Jack tried to keep his eye lock with her for as long as she dared, but she was quick to look away once her point had been made. She was being daring, but a bit unsure, like she hadn't quite decided on a plan. He came further into the room and chose the seat next to her on the couch, not too close, but close enough; If she wanted to have a personal conversation, then so be it.

"Okay, \_Sam,\_ " he emphasized her given name in a way that made her close her eyes and take a deep breath. They had kept their distance, since returning from the ice planet, meeting only once, at a diner outside the mountain. He had arrived first and ordered two coffees. She had shown up ten minutes later, and had left without taking a sip, five minutes after that. The conversation had been simple and to the point. No, they would not reveal Jonah and Thera's relationship on their mission reports. No, they would not let what happened affect the team. It had been a necessary move, both to protect Sam's career, and to protect the existence of SG1. It was for the good of all involved, \_feeling feelings \_be damned.

"Um," she began, opening and closing her mouth, then wetting her lips with her tongue in a way that made Jack swallow and shift in his seat.

"Interesting choice in color," he stated, giving her a moment to compose herself, or not. It completely shifted her focus. Her eyes darted around the room.

"Pardon?"

Jack pointed his chin in her general vicinity. "The orange," he said while picking a piece of lint off his jeans, "it works for me."

He saw her look down and partially deflate. She wasn't quite sure where the comment came from, but she thought he was being an ass. Fine, she could be an ass too. There was a long silence and Jack allowed it, then, he heard Sam's intake of air.

"I'm pregnant," Sam whispered on the exhale.

**\*\*Author's Note:** \_There is so much interest in fanfiction dealing with the events from "Beneath the Surface." Some authors have chosen to have Sam become pregnant during the episode. I find myself addicted to reading these, even though the episode in question has never been a particular favorite. I rewatched the episode, and while I had no intention of writing this, my mind created it nonetheless. Here is my take on what could have happened if Sam and Jack had explored a sexual relationship while on the ice planet. Do let me know what you think.\_\*\*

**\*\*Thank you, kindly, to Merista and sglon for being my research helpers. I know it was a true sacrifice, ladies ;) \*\***

**\*\*And to SamnJackalways, my fabulous beta, and Kathie for the second set of eyes! \*\***

**\*\*xoxo\*\***

## 2. Beneath the Regulations

Jack sat frozen in time, his eyes widening and his breath caught somewhere in his throat. Had she just saidâ€¦ pregnant?

"What?" he managed, also on a whisper.

He was looking at her and frowning, confused and unbelieving. Sam stared back at him, her lips parted, her forehead creased, and her look downcast. She had no idea how he was going to react to this, no idea how he would feel.

"Are you sure?" he said, shaking his head a bit.

Sam bit her lip and handed him the folded piece of paper. Taking it, but making sure not to touch her, Jack opened the sheet. It was a jumbled mess of numbers, percentage signs, and Sam's personal information, like her date of birth and, what the hell did LMC mean, anyway?

"Carter, I have no idea what any of this means," he spoke, tensely.

Sam sighed loudly, reaching for the sheet and snatching it back. "It means I'm pregnant, for sure. It's the results from a blood test. I had Janet run one after I took a home test and it came back positive." She folded the sheet back up and placed it on the coffee table in front of her, waiting for him to say something, anything.

Jack was beginning to lose the color on his cheeks and he ran a hand down his face, then back up again. "We only, uh, a couple of timesâ€¦"

Sam stared at him with raised eyebrows, refusing to blush. She rolled her eyes instead and sighed. "Jackâ€¦ I think you're old enough to know that once is all it takes," Sam said, with a bit more bite than necessary. "And there were three times, not justâ€¦"

"Four," he interrupted her.

Ok, so he was counting that frantic romp behind one of the exhaust pipes near the gas cylinders, right. That also meant he remembered everything she did, too. Great. Sam did flush pink, recollection was a bitter torture.

"Pregnant," he repeated. And she nodded.

Jack's hand went to his mouth and he just sat silently for a while.

He stood and crossed the room, then turned and walked back towards her, only to turn again. She recognized the nervous pacing, and allowed it. She had spent two days doing much the same thing, and he deserved the time to process this incredible complication surrounding the events of P3R-118.

Suddenly, he stopped and looked her over. "Are you hungry?"

Sam blinked. This was not what she was expecting him to say. "Am I hungry?" She repeated his question with a downward turn of her lips.

He walked over to her and sat back down. "Yes, are you hungry? All you had to eat on that damn planet was that awful gruel."

Sam let out an amused chuckle and settled on an easy upturn of her lips. "We've been back for more than a month, Sir. I've eaten plenty between then and now."

"Sir?" he dared. "I thought this was a personal conversation?"

Sam shifted on the couch and ignored both her slip and his reprimand. It was the end of the day and he obviously hadn't showered yet. She was near enough to catch a wiff of his scent, the one she had memorized on the ice planet. He had worked hard there, beneath all that ice, and when they met together, alone, to hold hands, to hug, to talk about their feelings, she could smell his sweat and the lingering scent of the hard-working man that had been Jonah. Jack was the same man, and here, next to him, she could smell the same scent. Her stomach quivered and her mind went dizzy, thinking of their couplings in corners and hidden bunks, the two of them beneath the surface, and her beneath him.

She opened her eyes in an attempt to dispel the memories, but he was still in the room, she was still in his house.

"Are you going to say anything else?" she braved. Jack was sitting up on the edge of the couch, tense, but impassive. She needed to know what he was thinking.

He swallowed. "How long?"

Sam looked at him. "Have I known? Or how longâ€¦ have I been pregnant?"

He looked up at her, and she could tell he hadn't considered one of those questions, though she wasn't sure which one. "Both," he answered.

"Janet says probably eight weeks. I've known for two days, though the blood test confirmation only came today," Sam looked to the table where the lab result sheet was, then looked back at Jack. "I felt that, umâ€¦" Sam cleared her throat. "I thought you needed to know, that I needed to tell you right away."

He nodded. "Thank you."

He stood and walked over to the mantel, looking at the picture of Charlie. He chanced a glance back at her with the momentary thought that the child could potentially not be his. He quickly dispelled the

idea; she had come to tell him right away. He didn't really know if Sam was in a relationship outside of everyone's knowledge; she was always working, either on a mission or in her lab, but she did have weekends off, had taken a whole week leave after the mess that had been 118. Hammond had ordered them all to take time off. He wondered if she had spent any of that time with a male companion.

"The baby is yours, Jack," she spoke softly, but the firm tone let him know that she could definitely read his thoughts. \_Damn. \_ Jack knew. It had been a year of looks, touches, feelings. If he couldn't stomach the thought of a relationship with any woman other than Sam, then perhaps she felt the same way after all. "There hasn't been anyone else," she continued, since he remained speechless. He nodded and lifted his right hand up to stop her from revealing anything else.

"Of course, Sam," he looked up briefly and saw her jaw was tight, her look uncertain. "I'm sorry, this is a bit of a surprise. I, uh, I'm."

"It's okay, um. Listen," Sam said, standing up and collecting her white paper, "maybe it'll be better if I give you some time to let this sink in. I still need some time myself; I just wanted you to."

"Wait," he stood also. "Please, wait." They stood face to face, looking into each other's eyes. Jack could swear hers had a slight sheen in them, but he couldn't be certain.

"Please, sit down," Jack begged her.

She nodded and sat again, this time making herself comfortable all the way back on the couch, a soft sigh escaping her lips. Jack ran his hands over his face, rubbing his eyes and making his way past her and towards the mantle again.

"Are you, ah," he paused and turned his head this way and that, "are you keeping it?"

She flinched but he never saw it, her face now downcast and sad. "Ah, yeah... yes," she saw his shoulders lose some of their tension, but he didn't turn around. "Maybe if it was fathered by a stranger, or someone I didn't, uh, I might have considered it," she spoke softly and he turned to face her. \_Someone I didn't care about.\_ They both knew what she meant, it had been a hell of a year, and this mission happened far too close to the zatarc confessions for her to have meant anything other than caring, other than love.

"But I would never, \_could\_ never do that to you," she added, shaking her head. "I'm not sure I could do that to myself," she hugged herself with both arms and shifted uncomfortably. "Actually, the thought of an abortion hadn't even entered my mind."

He turned from the mantle and stared back at her for a long while. He nodded briefly before walking back towards her and sitting down. "I'm sorry I brought it up. I would have hated that."

She met his eyes and held his gaze for a moment, until he looked away.

"Look," Sam started, "This doesn't have to affect both our careers. My tenure on a front line unit is pretty much shot for now, what with the pregnancy and then raising a child. But you don't have to be affected by this," Sam gestured at the situation. "Women get pregnant. They have babies. This doesn't have to be the end of the world. As long as nobody knows who the father is, no one will be the wiser andâ€" "

"Stop," he said. "This is crazy, stop."

She obeyed, like she always did.

Sam breathed out loudly. "Well, someone has to say something, you seemâ€| I'm just trying to make this better."

"Uh, yeah. I never thought I would have a child again, so please, forgive me for being a bit shaken up," Jack answered grouchyly.

"Hey! This isn't easy for me either," she spat back, standing up.

"Well, you certainly have your whole future planned out without me!"

They were silent for a while and Sam sat back down. She sighed and rubbed circles on her temples with her fingers. "What do you mean, without you? We can't. What do you expect, Jack? To play family? We'll be court-martialed the minute someone finds out I'm pregnant with your child! Both our careers will be over."

He looked up sharply. "So you want me to just pretend it's not mine?"

Sam became even smaller than she felt. "I don't know, I just imagined thatâ€" "

"Is that what you want?" he pushed.

Her mouth agape, she stared at him. "Um, I don't know, Iâ€| "

"I'm not giving up my child. I can't, Sam!"

Sam moved her fingers from her head. Of course he couldn't. She didn't have any attachments to this baby, yet. She couldn't feel it, couldn't even feel any pregnancy symptoms. She wasn't nauseated, tender, or otherwise hormonal. She was just missing a period, for crying out loud! How could she make any decisions about this while she had no connections to it yet. She sighed again, missing Jonah and his comfort. Jack knew what it was like to have a child. Sam realized, suddenly, that he was also keenly aware of what life was like without a child, without one that was his. \_Damn.\_

She grasped her hands between her legs and tried to calm her beating heart.

"Maybe we need to think about it. This isn't going awayâ€| and we have months and months to come up with a solution, so maybe I should just go, for nowâ€| "

"No. "

"No? "

"No, " Jack wouldn't budge.

"Jackâ€| "

"Samâ€| "

She bit her lip and Jack announced, "I think we should tell Hammond."

There was a very heavy silence in the already quiet room.

"Tell Hammond," she repeated the phrase calmly and waited. After a few minutes, she spoke her thoughts, "We can't. He's your CO!" Sam shifted her left knee up onto the couch.

"He's going to find out you're pregnant anyway, as the base CMO, Janet has to tell him."

Sam shook her head vigorously. "I asked her not to. I asked for the test to be a part of my private care."

"None of us have private anything in the military, Carter. Everything medical that we do at the base goes on our record."

"Not mine," Sam answered, her voice firm.

"What?"

"Not mine," she cleared her throat and turned on the couch to face him, her left arm over the back of the couch. "After Jolinar left the protein marker and naquadah in my blood I can't go to any physician for anything, invasive or not, outside of the mountain. I can't have my blood drawn, my urine tested, my throat swabbed, nothing! All of my medical care now has to go through the mountain. The first year this happened I had a meeting with Janet and General Hammond about it. I requested that I be allowed to keep non-base related illnesses and routine exams in a private capacity. I didn't see the need for the Air Force to keep tabs on my cavities or choice of birth control. Janet agreed. So, no, Janet won't be sharing this information with General Hammond, not until I do."

Jack looked back and his gaze landed on her orange sweater, making him shift. "Okay, that buys you a bit of time, but not much." Why the hell had she worn that color to his house? "There's a form she has to fill out... it's required by the Force Health Management. She has to notify the Service of any positive pregnancy results within a week." He looked at her and noticed her face had paled. "It might even be five days... has something to do with the Fetal Protection Program... and you're on a front-line unit."

"How do you know all this?" Sam asked, feeling queasy and uncertain for the first time, her slim fingers running through her hair.

Jack took in her precarious state. "You don't become a full bird without learning everything there is to know about the Air

Force."

She closed her eyes and he winced at the arrogance of his speech, so he added, "one of my colleagues became pregnant when I was stationed in Germany."

"Ahâ€|" she commented.

Jack thought of something as he was processing what she had just said, and his head spun quickly towards her. "Soâ€|" were you?"

Her eyes narrowed at his question. "Was I what?"

"On birth control?" he clarified.

She tilted her head to the side and nodded. "It's a patch. I wore it on my hipâ€|" taking a daily pill is too hard on missions."

His mind immediately jumped to the memory of her hips. He was man enough to admit that he remembered both the sight and the feel of them. He looked back up and noticed that her cheeks had colored slightly, and he wondered why she felt embarrassed over this. After everything he had done to her body, it surprised him that she could still feel remotely nervous about this.

"They must've taken the patch off on the planetâ€|" or maybe I took it off myself, who knows? I probably didn't remember why it was there," Sam said, moving her eyes from his.

Jack nodded, but still looked a bit lost. "So without wearing the patchâ€|"

Sam licked her lips. "Yeah, no patch, no deal. A new patch has to be worn each week. I keep extras in my kit, but, anywayâ€|"

He nodded. \_Alright then.\_ He ignored the effect the look of her tongue had on his lower body, and coughed. Time for the hard questions.

"Does Janet know it's mine?" Jack asked, changing the subject.

Sam sighed. "Yes."

Jack didn't say anything, so Sam added, "She was in the observation deck during the za'tarc testing. She asked me today if you were the father. I didn't answer but I'm sure she knows. She has the estimated date of conception and that I was on P3R-118 on that date."

"The very fact that you conceived while on a mission gives her the right to reveal it to General Hammond. Are you sure she won't?"

Sam looked alarmed, like she hadn't thought it all through. "She won't," Sam said, even as her mind was unsure.

Jack was pensive. "Look, the fact that we were mind stamped to believe we were completely different peopleâ€|"

"We were imprinted with different personalities," Sam corrected, "that of Jonah and Thera."



"Right! Even better! We were imprinted into believing we were completely other people. The brass will simply have to accept this baby as, asâ€¦"

"As what? Alien influence? We already lied, Jack! What are they going to say when they find out that not only did we have a sexual relationship during the mission, we omitted that from our mission reports? We weren't under alien influence when we wrote the damn reports."

"That was my mistake."

"What was?"

"The decision to omit it from our reports. We should have dealt with it then, we should have dealt with it months ago."

Sam shifted in her seat and tried to figure out what he could mean. "There wasn't anything to deal with months ago," she said.

"Bullshit."

"Hey!" Sam turned her body towards him, her look telling him that she didn't appreciate his brusque attitude. But she knew they had to do this, had to talk, and she was being plenty feisty herself.

"There's been \_something\_ to deal with for months and you know it, years evenâ€¦" Jack said, calmly.

The pregnant pause and the way she was biting her lower lip made him wish that he were biting it too. This close to her he could smell her shampoo. She hadn't smelled like shampoo on the planet, showers weren't really available all that often, but he remembered her smell, her scent. It filled him now and threatened to throw him beneath the regulations, \_again.\_

"What are you saying?" She asked, her voice having returned to its soft quality.

"I'm saying I shouldn't have agreed to leave it in the room. I didn't \_want\_ to leave it in the room, Carter!"

She deflated and sat back down. He didn't want to leave it in the room? Why the hell hadn't he told her? "This is such a mess," she voiced. She was shaky and holding her hand to her mouth. Suddenly, she let out a humorless chuckle and spoke into the tense room; "Dad's gonna be so disappointed in me."

Jack felt an enormous sense of compassion for her then. "Hey, come on. Don't do that. This is exactly why we have to come clean. Having an illicit affair isn't who you are."

"I didn't know at the time that I was having an illicit affair!" Sam said angrily.

"I know! That's what I mean. That wouldn'tâ€¦ It isn't who either of us isâ€¦ this would never have happened if it weren't for the damn mind stamp."

She raised her eyebrows and felt brave. "Wouldn't it have?"

He looked away and groaned. She was right, it very well could have. "At least if it had under normal circumstances, I would've made sure you didn't get pregnant." Then he winced. God, why did he have to be such an ass?

"Oh, thanks. That really makes this so much better, Jack," Sam retorted, dripping sarcasm, her anger building.

"Ack. This isn't how things are supposed to go. What I meant to say was that I'd never put you in that position. I'd never screw with your career that way."

They both breathed in and out, in and out. She knew he was genuine, that he would never jeopardize her career for a relationship with her, for a roll in the hay. Sometimes she wished he would. Sometimes, Sam was just that desperate for a piece of self-fulfillment. Her mind was going a mile a minute, with his confession, with her pregnancy, with the memory of how good he was at a roll in the hay.

"I think I should go," she said instead.

"We haven't decided what to do yet," Jack stated. The room's tense atmosphere radiated heat and Sam suddenly wanted to feel cold again.

"I don't think we can. Not tonight. I think we both need to think, let it sink in, then we can make some decisions."

He didn't say anything, just stared at a spot on his floor.

"I'm gonna go now, Sir," Sam said, ending any argument he might make for her departure.

He nodded. "Okay."

She stood and moved out of his way and up towards the door. Turning, she was surprised to see he was still sitting on the couch, and hadn't followed her to his front door. "I'll see you Monday?" she said as way of parting.

Hearing her voice again made him move. He stood and in three quick steps was again in front of her. "Please take care of yourself, and call me if you need anything before Monday."

She raised her eyebrows at him.

"Just humor me," he said.

"Yes, Sir."

She turned and stepped onto the porch.

"And Sam?"

She turned quickly back to face him.

"That plan you had of telling people it was just some guy's kid

and he's not involved, yada yada... it was a fine plan but there's just one problem," Jack said, shoving his hands in his pockets and rocking on the balls of his feet.

"What?" she asked, dreading his response.

"You're not a liar."

She coughed uncomfortably and looked at her shoes. "How do you know?" Then she chanced a look back up to his face.

"I know," he said, holding her gaze, holding her heart. "It'll kill youâ€| and the kid. You don't want to do it."

Sam didn't answer. She licked her lips, looked around at his porch, then turned and left without another word.

Jack watched her leave in her little car. He closed the door and rested his forehead against the wood of the door, willing answers into his brain.

**\*\*Author's Note: \*\***

**\*\*Thanks, SamnJackAlways for the beta!\*\***

**\*\*Thanks Merista, sglon, and Kathie for the help!\*\***

**\*\*I appreciate all who are reading! xoxo\*\***

### 3. Beneath Her

Sam woke up groggily and turned over on her side. She groaned as the muscles in her lower back stretched and she slowly opened one eye, then the other. The morning light was streaming in from her venetian blinds and Sam turned her head to look at her clock on her bedside table. It said 9:47 a.m. Shocked and thinking her clock had somehow stopped working properly, Sam propped herself on her left elbow and reached for her wrist watch lying beside her water bottle. The watch face revealed that Sam had indeed slept in longer than she had since her late 20s. "Wow," she said to herself, returning the wristwatch to her bedside table and rubbing her eyes with her right hand. She had gotten into bed early the night before, but had been unable to fall asleep for many hours, thoughts of her conversation with Colonel O'Neill fresh in her mind. She had begun weighing options, reviewing different outcomes, seeking positive solutions. She had finally succumbed to sleep at some point, her pillow wet from tears she could not explain. She threw the covers off her legs and moved out of bed towards her bathroom.

Once showered, Sam stood before her sink mirror and dropped her hands onto the counter, hands on either side of the sink, and stared at herself in the mirror. "Samantha Carter, what are you going to do?" she asked the image in the mirror. Receiving no illuminative answer, Sam sighed and grabbed a brush, combing through her spiky short hair. They had done this to her, those bastards on 118. Sure, her hair had probably been longer than regulations allowed anyway, but she had enjoyed the way Colonel O'Neill stared at her hair often, prided herself in being a little sexy and a little feminine with the longer look. She sighed and chided herself for thinking such things.

She reached for the bottles of pills on her counter, one tiny round pill, and one huge horse pill, folic acid and prenatal vitamins, an addition to her morning routine. She winced as the giant pill caught in her throat, and opened the tap to cup some water to her mouth and aid in the swallow. "Oh, that is disgusting!" Sam spoke to the empty bathroom, regretting her judgement of the chewable gummy variety she had passed up at the drugstore. She had done some immediate research after taking a home pregnancy test, and the first course of action, according to the internet, was a good prenatal vitamin with a certain amount of folic acid in it. But at the drug store, Sam couldn't remember how much folic acid the vitamins had to contain, and opted for buying both products separately. She made the mental decision to go back later today and pick up a jar of the gummy vitamins. She didn't believe she could swallow that pill again without gagging.

She spent the day lounging around her house, doing mindless tasks and hoping for some miracle solution to fall into her lap. When she vomited her dinner shortly after eating it, she cursed her indisposition and prayed the rest of her pregnancy didn't contain any more of that. She hated vomiting, and as she wiped at her damp forehead near the toilet bowl, she remembered that she hated feeling this uneasy about her life, about her future. A child wasn't something she had planned at this point in her life, which is exactly why she was on birth control. No, she wasn't involved with a man, hadn't slept with anyone before Jonah inâ€| she didn't even want to think about that. She had been focused on her work with the Stargate Program. The Air Force had been an easy option for her career; Jacob had encouraged her and modeled one of the only lives she knew. After Sam's mom had died, Jacob had become her only parental example, and she followed in his footsteps and in his dreams in a way that she hadn't even realized until now. Yes, he would be so disappointed in her, screwing her commanding officer and her career all in one blow.

She was going to be a mother, and she was going to need to make major changes to her life. She was going to be a mother, and the father of her child was her commanding officer. She stared at the white walls of the bathroom. Jack really was the only man she could imagine herself having a child with. Of course, in her imagination of that scenario, they weren't forbidden lovers. She remembered how adorable Jonah had beenâ€| remembered how he had slowly put his arms around her shoulders, then taken one of her hands in his. She remembered the feeling of contentment the single act of hand-holding provided her, remembered the first time they kissed on the planet, remembered the first time his hand snuck under her pants. She wondered now how they had managed to return to the role of Major and Colonel so quickly, how they had so easily suppressed the sexual connection that seemed stronger than any she had ever had. She opened her eyes and sighed loudly, again. Pulling herself up from the bathroom floor and looking again into the bathroom mirror, she squared her shoulders and said, "Time to start acting like a big girl."

**\*\*A/N: Thanks SamnJackalways for the beta, and to all the readers! Hope you are enjoying the story!\*\***

Jack stood from the couch and made his way down the hallway to the spare room in his house. He had it set up as an office and he used it on the rare occasion where he needed the computer or a desk. He replaced the photo album onto the bookshelf and sighed. Both hands resting in his pockets, he pursed his lips as he observed the few picture frames that lined the shelves. Jack wasn't usually a sentimental guy, but this whole Carter pregnancy thing was simply too much. Memories of Charlie as a baby flooded him and he had reached for tangible evidence that Charlie had actually been real; that Jack O'Neill, at one point in his life, had been capable of fathering, loving, devoting himself to something small and wonderful. Charlie had transformed his life, and his death had almost ended Jack's own.

He wondered now about Sam's kid. His kid. He wondered what he or she would look like, what it would feel like to hold his own child again. The situation was truly complicated for him and Sam. They had engaged in a more than unprofessional relationship on the ice planet, believing they were different people, having been imprinted with different personalities. He wondered now if perhaps their personalities had been designed to be pre-disposed towards one-another. It was a possible scenario, sure, but in all likelihood they had gravitated towards one another because of the feelings and emotions that were already present in their brains, unable to be erased or printed over. Added to that was the pure chemistry, the magnetism that drew Jack and Sam together regardless of their state of mind. The mind stamp on 118 had removed all vestiges of regulations, had broken down their previous commitment to military rules and erased whatever inhibitions they might have had concerning offering themselves to each other freely and without thought of repercussions. He remembered Sam's willingness in those moments, her honesty in her affection for him, her feelings for him. He groaned at the memory of her lips parting under his, of her sighs of pleasure, of her open participation in the hurried and unhurried acts of lovemaking. Yes, there had been four times, and his lips quirked up at the memory that half of those had been initiated by her.

The picture of Charlie riding a tricycle caught his eye, and Jack remembered the exact day. Sarah's dad had brought the bike over the day of Charlie's second birthday and Charlie had learned immediately how to peddle. Jack remembered his joy at watching the tiny chubby feet slip occasionally from the pedals, his pride at having a son who was smart and tall, and who looked like him. He closed his eyes and knew that he couldn't let Sam block him from being the father of her son, couldn't keep him from loving this child, raising this child, supporting his or her every move. It was a second chance. Maybe this kid could really change his life, end his loneliness, give him some purpose outside of the mountain. And there was Sam—nothing could be more complicated than wanting a relationship with a subordinate officer in your command. He shook his head. Scratch that. Impregnating a subordinate officer in your command while on a mission was indeed more complicated. She was the most beautiful woman in all of Colorado, the most attractive soldier in any military organization on the planet, the smartest woman in the entire Galaxy. And he wanted her.

This kid, this kid—was also their kid. Together.

He started when he heard the familiar ring of his phone through the open door. Quickly making his way out, he saw Carter's name on the

caller ID. Hope bubbled in his chest.

"Carter?"

"Hey," she answered.

"You alright?" she sounded flustered to him, maybe a bit out of breath.

"Yeah, I'm fine, Sir," she answered quickly.

"Okay."

"Can you meet me?"

"Sure, of course," Jack answered immediately.

"At the diner... I'm driving there now," she said, and he didn't have to ask which diner.

"I'll meet you there in ten."

Maybe his second chance would start now.

**\*\*Author's Note: \*\***

**\*\*Thanks, Mon, for the beta! And Mer, Pam & Kathie for the help :)\*\***

End  
file.